

their eyes. There is no sign yet of real horse-trading except a leak here and there. For instance, the White House might be willing to modify its opposition to a cut in the capital gains tax. The Republicans seem willing to scale back their \$240 billion tax cut. But the House freshmen and their allies insist that they simply do not trust Mr. Clinton to bring the process to a conclusion until they get a clearer signal of where he would be willing to make concessions, particularly on Medicare, Medicaid and welfare.

The freshmen militants, Mr. Gingrich and even the Democratic leadership have the luxury of being dealt into a game whose outcome means less to them than to Mr. Clinton and Mr. Dole. With their eyes on the Presidential race, each man is trying to calculate whether he has more to gain from accommodation or recalcitrance. Mr. Dole has promised to bring adult leadership to the White House, but he does not look very adult if he cannot stand up to his party's kiddie-corps zealots. Mr. Clinton needs to emerge as a President who can stay resolute in the face of opposition; but at a certain point the Chief Executive of a Government that cannot open for business will begin to look weak.

Mr. Dole is right when he observes that Americans are growing impatient with the budget impasse. Right now, Mr. Clinton may have more to gain by holding out on the budget while insisting he wants to reopen the Government. But there is clearly a deal within reach, and the public will remember who walks out of the wreckage with it.

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended until the hour of 12:30, and Senators be allowed to have 10 minutes to speak.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the majority leader has indicated to the Senator from Virginia that that is quite agreeable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE SHUTDOWN

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, all my life I have heard the saying, "Can't see the forest for the trees." I think those words can be appropriately applied to the situation we now find ourselves in. For too many Federal workers, for too many thousands of honest, hard-working Americans trying to make a decent living, this budget impasse and shutdown has demonstrated to them that some of their elected representatives cannot see the forest for the trees.

While some are wrapped up in trying to score political points, to gain political favor in certain circles, they are missing the point of what is really going on outside the beltway. How disappointing it is to pick up the morning's Washington Post with the headlines, "Employees Find They Are an Afterthought." How sad it is to know that people who need food, who need medicine and basic care will be deprived of services. How sad it is, Mr. President, to hear some demagog the situation by saying that nobody is missing those Government workers and we need to get rid of more of them.

My office, as others have stated here this morning, is being overrun with calls and letters about how this shutdown is affecting families in Kentucky, far outside the beltway, far away from the political arena. A mother in Lexington, KY, wrote me, "Most of us live from paycheck to paycheck. We cannot survive without being paid. I am a single parent struggling to pay rent, a car payment, and keep food in the house, so I haven't been able to save part of my salary. If I'm not paid on January 16, I will be evicted." This is a woman that was on welfare, that was able to get a job and get off of welfare, and now the Government is forcing her back into welfare. She asks in her letter, "Isn't this the United States of America? Isn't our Government supposed to be by the people and for the people?" "Federal employees," she says, "are also people."

She is speaking from her heart about real people, about the thousands who cannot get mortgage insurance, thousands who are losing home loans, thousands working in service industries, the rippling effect, facing the daily threat of being laid off. Homeowners in eastern Kentucky threatened with landslides because the Office of Surface Mining is operating on reduced staff and reduced funding. Real people, Mr. President.

Another person wrote, "I'm excepted from furlough which means I'm working now with no pay. The check I received yesterday was one-quarter of my salary. My mortgage is due. This one-quarter does not cover the mortgage. What is worse is that I have two small children. I must continue to pay my baby sitter to keep them after school while I go to work for no pay."

I received a call from a grandmother. I do not know how many in here have ever been involved in trying to help a couple adopt a child. When I was Governor of Kentucky we worked with agencies. It is an emotional period. It is a real decision to adopt a child. So I got a call from this grandmother. She was worried about her granddaughter. The adoption of a baby has been halted because the agencies do not have enough money to process the necessary paperwork. That is hurt, Mr. President. That is not inconvenience, that is hurt. You have hurt that family that made up their mind to adopt a child. That is hurt, capital H-u-r-t. She is looking to her representatives for help and answers. What do we do to help her? How do you tell someone that is out there working hard, paying their taxes, that because of circumstances completely out of their control they cannot go forward with adopting a child?

Mr. President, the hardest thing I have had to do in my 21 years in the U.S. Senate is to say to men and women in the military to go defend our country on some foreign shore, to lay their lives on the line. One thing I have told them, and one thing that helps, that whatever I can do to support them when they come back, or their loved

ones if they do not come back, I will do.

Looking now at the VA, "VA Runs on Promises." "Nursing home workers tend patients without pay. They are stripping the sheets off, the laundry, trying to take care of our veterans, for no pay."

So we say to our veterans, the only reason you are being taken care of is because they are willing to come as long as they can. These people cannot get another job. They are prohibited from getting another job to have some income, maybe, to offset the loss of their paycheck.

Let me also tell you about "Helen's Hotline" from the VA hospital in Lexington. What are they doing? Food—God's Pantry, in Lexington, distributes food to the homeless and those who need food. They will provide up to 3 weeks of food to those people. They are even giving them transportation to God's Pantry in order to pick up some food. Food and social and spiritual support are being offered by the VA hospital there in Lexington, stress relief, and the canteen service will accept—think about this, now—accept postdated checks from the cafeteria or retail store through January 17.

Creditors' letters have been sent from the Director of the VA to the utilities, the mortgage companies, the lenders, the bankers, asking for leniency because they do not have their check.

I think the lowest blow of all is they have set up a food bank at the VA hospital for their employees, and they are being asked to bring food, those who can afford it, to bring nonperishable food to the VA hospital to help their employees. They have asked the citizens of Lexington to help with the food bank and financial contributions, monetary donations. They are trying to van pool and help the employees because they have lost their cars because they could not make the payments. These people do not wait on payments: "Oh, go ahead, that's all right, you don't have to pay me until you get paid." That does not work.

"Things to do." The utilities companies? Ask them to be lenient. Mortgage company? Ask them to be lenient. How lenient will these people be?

"What is this," one asked me. "Is this really America? Is this what America is all about? Is this how the world's greatest superpower functions?"

These people want a resolution to the crisis. They want to reopen Government just like the distinguished majority leader, Senate Republicans, and Senate Democrats want. As one said, it is time to stop the nonsense going on here in Washington. They agree with our majority leader when he says, "Enough is enough."

Let us reopen Government. Let us stop this insanity and get on with the shaping of a fair and equitable budget agreement.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the

full text of two letters I referred to in my statement earlier.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JANUARY 3, 1996.

DEAR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE: I'm writing to speak out for furloughed federal employees and working federal employees who are not being paid. I happen to be one of those directed to work without pay. Since I came to work for the federal government in 1977 federal employees have taken the brunt of budget cuts and have been reviled by Presidents and Congress. Our salaries have fallen far behind the private sector. It is proposed that our pensions be further cut and even those of us who had careers covered under Social Security before coming to the government have had our future Social Security benefits cut in half. However, this budget battle is the final outrage against federal employees. What private company could order their employees to work, but not pay them? Ironically, the federal government would be on their doorstep immediately. I can't even file for unemployment benefits since I have been directed to work, and am doing so without pay.

Most of us live from paycheck to paycheck. We cannot survive without being paid. I am a single parent, struggling to pay rent, a car payment and keep food in the house so I haven't been able to save part of my salary.

If I am not paid on January 16, 1996, I will be evicted. My landlord isn't interested in the reason he doesn't receive his rent. He just demands it be paid on the 1st day of each month. I will also lose my car if this continues and my credit will be ruined. It may be already.

We were given a letter to send to our creditors asking for forbearance. Do you really believe that the banks, insurance companies and Corporate America care why our bills are not being paid. NO—THEY DO NOT!

Isn't this the United States of America? Isn't our government supposed to be by the people and for the people? Federal employees are also people. We pay taxes. We vote. We are part of the people referred to in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. I would have never believed this could happen in this country. We are being deprived of our basic human rights because we happen to be federal employees. My mind almost refuses to accept that this is happening to me, but the realities of unpaid bills and basic needs not being met jerk me back into the real world that I must live in—unknown to you!

I have related my personal situation to you but please remember that it is also representative of the situation of about 700,000 citizens of this country who have given daily of themselves to serve this country.

I am frustrated, fearful, resentful and very angry over the situation I have been placed in by you. Regardless of your political allegiance or your personal position on the national budget issues, you have severely and wrongfully damaged my life forever. The harm done to this point is irreversible and the damage irreparable. Please wake up and stop this nightmare.

Sincerely,

JANUARY 3, 1996.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN, I am an employee of Social Security. As you may be aware, as a field office employee, I am excepted from furlough which means I am working now with no pay. The check I received yesterday was for ½ salary (through 12/15/95). My mortgage is due and this ½ does not cover the mortgage. What is worse is that I have 2 small children. I must continue to pay a

baby sitter to keep them after school while I go to work with no pay.

The end result is that we do not have money for anything except utilities. My children wanted to know this morning why they had left over Christmas turkey and dressing in their lunch boxes instead of their usual chips and sandwiches. It is because these, the chips and sandwich are now "non-essential" items in our household and because you all can not see fit to work the budget out—they must suffer. If you have a better explanation that I can give a 5 yr. old and 8 year old—please let me know. This is beginning to HURT! My children do not understand and neither do I. Please work this out—Soon!! Before I have to explain to them why we have no heat—

Sincerely,

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, we hear a lot about "all the President has to do is sign the bills." If you put things in the bills that are not acceptable, then you ought not to expect it to be signed. That is trying to put the President in a position where he cannot sign it. All we have to do is pass a clean CR and put Government back to work.

The Senate has done that. The Democrats in the House are ready. There is only one group, one element that is saying to my people down there: "We do not care whether you pay the mortgage, whether you pay your utilities, whether you buy food"—things of that nature. We think we ought to get with those people and say to them, let us get on with the running of the Government. We can balance the budget.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). The Senator from Oklahoma.

ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, it is with interest I listened to some of our colleagues talk about the Government shutting down, and I also note yesterday, when the President had a press conference, he said the congressional Republicans shut down the Government. At least he said Congress shut down Government. He mentioned several examples.

Several of the examples that have been mentioned, both on the floor and by the President and by other people, some of the horror stories of individuals who have lost their jobs, who are not being paid, are in agencies for which the President vetoed the appropriation bill. One agency that has received as much attention as any other is Interior, the appropriation bill that is covered by Interior, dealing with national parks and the museums.

The Washington Post has run some front-page articles talking about the museums not being open, the Smithsonian shut down, national parks being shut down, not having access for individuals wanting to have their vacations and go to the parks, not being able to get in because the Government shut it down and, as the President said, Congress shut it down.

I just happen to be aware of the fact the President vetoed the Interior bill.

The President is the one who shut down the parks. The President is the one who did not make it possible for the parks to be opened. If he had signed the bill, those people would have been paid. They would not have been furloughed. The parks would be open. The Smithsonian would be open. Those people would have had coverage. There would be no disruption.

I just make that point. It is interesting that everything is Congress' fault. The President vetoed the Interior bill. I think that is unfortunate.

I used to manage that bill. Now Senator GORTON is managing that bill, and I think he has done a very good job. I looked at the veto message dealing with Interior. There are different reasons why the President vetoed the bill. These are very poor excuses for vetoing a bill. I have urged others, and I hope maybe, I will tell my friends and colleagues, maybe within a very short period of time we will have another Interior bill on the floor. I hope that is the case. I hope it happens today.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the House of Representatives is going to take up a veto override today on that. I was over there earlier this morning.

Mr. NICKLES. I appreciate that. The veto override may not happen. I hope it does. That is one way we could get the employees back to work immediately.

If that does not happen, I hope we will take the original Interior bill as it passed through both Houses and maybe make some changes. I am looking at the President's veto message on Interior. Most of these changes could be made with very little dollars involved and maybe some better understanding.

We had the Presiding Officer, a moment ago, who is from Alaska—part of it was dealing with Tongass. There is a misunderstanding on what would happen in the Tongass. Some people were saying the Interior bill as passed would open up a lot of additional clear cutting. I do not think that is the case. We can clarify that, and we should clarify it.

I am looking through some of the other things that were mentioned. I ask unanimous consent to have the President's veto message printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. NICKLES. But these are minuscule problems. This is no reason to shut down the Interior Department, national parks, Forest Service and so on, and everything else that is covered by this bill, Indian Health Services—you name it.

So, let us try to accommodate. Let us make a couple of concessions. Let us work to resolve some of the problems that are raised in here. It can be done with very few dollars and open up the Interior Department, open up the national parks, open up the Smithsonian, open up the national museums. There is no reason not to. The President should not have vetoed the bill in the